

What Is Claimed Is:

1. A distribution system having a parent  
server and a plurality of child servers, being  
5 arranged to be capable of connection with a  
plurality of clients through communication  
circuits, so that contents held by the parent  
server and/or the child servers are distributed to  
the clients; wherein

10 the parent server comprises:

an unit that receives position information of  
the clients and identification information of the  
contents whose distribution is requested by the  
clients; and

15 an unit that selects the child server which  
holds the contents whose distribution is requested  
and which is closest to the client that originates  
the distribution request, using the received  
client position information and identification  
20 information of the contents, and that notifies the  
client that originates the distribution request of  
the position information of the selected child  
server; and

25 the child server comprises an unit that  
distributes the contents whose distribution is  
requested in response to a request of the client  
originating the distribution request.

2. The distribution system according to claim  
1, wherein

said parent server comprises an unit that  
5 ascertains the presence or absence of a  
distribution request or the frequency of  
distribution requests for said contents from said  
clients situated in an area for which said child  
server is responsible, and

10 said child server comprises an unit that  
acquires and copies from said parent server said  
contents that are not held by said child server,  
on the basis of the ascertained presence or  
absence of a distribution request or the frequency  
15 of distribution requests.

3. The distribution system according to claim  
2 wherein said child server comprises:

an unit that ascertains the presence or  
20 absence of a distribution request or the frequency  
of distribution requests for said contents from  
said clients situated in the area for which said  
child server is responsible, and

an unit that deletes from said child server  
25 said contents which are held by said child server  
on the basis of the ascertained presence or  
absence of a distribution request or the frequency

of distribution requests.

4. The distribution system according to claim 2 wherein said child server comprises:

5 an unit that deletes from said child server said contents which are held by said child server on the basis of the presence or absence of a distribution request or the frequency of distribution requests ascertained by said parent server.

10 5. A distribution system having a parent server and a plurality of child servers, the being arranged to be capable of connection with a plurality of clients through communication circuits, so that contents held by the parent server and/or the child servers are distributed to the clients; wherein

15 the parent server comprises an unit that ascertains the presence or absence of a distribution request or the frequency of distribution requests for said contents from the clients situated in an area for which the child server is responsible, and

20 the child server comprises an unit that acquires and copies from the parent server the contents which are not held by said child server

on the basis of the ascertained presence or  
absence of a distribution request or the frequency  
of distribution requests.

5           6. The distribution system according to claim  
5 wherein said child server comprises:

an unit that ascertains the presence or  
absence of a distribution request or the frequency  
of distribution requests for said contents from  
10 the clients situated in the area for which said  
child server is responsible; and

an unit that deletes from said child server  
said contents which are held by said child server  
on the basis of the ascertained presence or  
15 absence of a distribution request or the frequency  
of distribution requests.

7. The distribution system according to claim  
5 wherein said child server comprises an unit that  
20 deletes from said child server said contents which  
are held by said child server on the basis of the  
presence or absence of a distribution request or  
the frequency of distribution requests ascertained  
by said parent server.

25           8. A computer program product that operates on  
a parent server in a distribution system having

the parent server and a plurality of child servers,  
being arranged to be capable of connection with a  
plurality of clients through communication  
circuits, so that contents held by the parent  
server and/or the child servers are distributed to  
the clients, said computer program product  
comprising:

a step of selecting the child server that  
holds the contents whose distribution is requested  
and that is closest to the client that made the  
distribution request on the basis of position  
information of the client that makes a  
distribution request for the contents and  
identification information of the contents whose  
distribution is requested by the client; and

a step of communicating the position  
information of the selected child server to the  
client that makes the distribution request.

9. A computer program product that operates on  
a parent server in a distribution system having  
the parent server and a plurality of child servers,  
being arranged to be capable of connection with a  
plurality of clients through communication  
circuits, so that the contents held by the parent  
server and/or the child servers are distributed to  
the clients, said computer program product

comprising:

a step of ascertaining the presence or absence of a distribution request or the frequency of distribution requests in respect of the contents from the clients situated within an area for which the child server is responsible; and

a step of giving the child server notification to prompt copying to the child server from the parent server of the contents that are not held by the child server, or deleting from the child server the contents that are held by the child server, on the basis of the ascertained presence or absence of a distribution request or the frequency of distribution requests.

10. A computer program product that operates on a child server in a distribution system having a parent server and a plurality of child servers, being arranged to be capable of connection with a plurality of clients through communication circuits, so that the contents held by the parent server and/or the child servers are distributed to the clients, said computer program product comprising:

program code which copies to the child server from the parent server the contents that are not held by the child server, or deletes from the

child server the contents that are held by the  
child server, on the basis of presence or absence  
of a distribution request or frequency of  
distribution requests for the contents from the  
5 clients situated in an area for which the child  
server is responsible.

11. A method of distributing contents to  
clients in a distribution system including a  
10 parent server and a plurality of child servers,  
being arranged to be capable of connection with  
the plurality of clients through communication  
circuits, comprising:

a step in which the parent server receives  
15 identification information of the contents whose  
distribution is requested and position information  
of the client that makes a request for  
distribution of the contents;

a step in which the parent server selects, on  
20 the basis of the received position information of  
the client and contents identification information,  
the child server which has the contents that is  
requested for distribution and which is closest to  
the client that makes the request for distribution,  
25 and notifies the client that makes the request for  
distribution of the position information of the  
selected child server; and

a step in which the selected child server distributes the contents whose distribution is requested in response to a request of the client that makes the distribution request.

5

12. A method of distributing contents to clients in a distribution system including a parent server and a plurality of child servers, being arranged to be capable of connection with the plurality of clients through communication circuits, comprising:

a step of ascertaining the presence or absence of a distribution request or the frequency of distribution requests in respect of the contents from the clients situated in an area for which the child server is responsible;

a step of copying the contents which are not held on the child server from the parent server to the child server, or deleting the contents which are held on the child server from the child server on the basis of the ascertained presence or absence of a distribution request or the frequency of distribution requests; and

a step of performing distribution from the child server in response to a distribution request for contents held by the child server from the clients situated in the area for which the child



server is responsible.

13. A distribution system comprising a parent  
server, a plurality of child servers and a  
5 plurality of clients which are connected through  
communication circuits so that contents held by  
the parent server and/or the child servers are  
distributed to the clients, wherein:

the clients communicate to the parent server  
10 position information of the clients and  
identification information of the contents whose  
distribution is requested by the clients,

the parent server selects, on the bases of  
the position information of the client and the  
15 contents identification information that is  
communicated thereto, the child server that holds  
the contents whose distribution is requested and  
that is closest to the client that originates the  
distribution request, and communicates the  
20 position information of the selected child server  
to the client originating the distribution request,  
and

the client that originates the distribution  
request receives the contents whose distribution  
25 is requested from the selected child server, on  
the basis of the position information of the  
selected child server.

14. The distribution system according to claim  
13, wherein receipt performed by said client of  
contents from said selected child server is  
5 conducted using a program downloaded to said  
client from said parent server when the request  
for distribution of said contents is made.